THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION OF THE FAITH

SITUATION-TASK-PROPOSALS-RECOMMENDATION

SITUATION: The Episcopal Church in the United States and the Anglican Church of Canada have departed in several essential points of Apostolic doctrine and order from that maintained in the Anglican Communion as part of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. As a result of these departures:

1. A substantial number of church members belonging to no church or jurisdiction in Canada and the USA no longer are able to receive the Holy Sacraments or share in public worship of The Church.

2. Several separate and competing jurisdictions of "continuing Anglicans" have come into being in the United States and Canada with episcopal orders derived from the ECUSA line or that of the Philippine Independent Church (whose episcopal line derives from ECUSA). [In this report no reference is made to other jurisdictions of the Anglican tradition; it seeks to limit itself to those whose teaching and practice lend themselves to more immediate hope of unity and possible union.]

3. There are congregations and clergy dispossessed or about to be dispossessed by their ECUSA bishops for their opposition to departures from the Faith, Order and Biblical morality. One such congregation and its priest have been accepted by the Bishop of London in his capacity as a Bishop of The Church as faithful Anglicans with him as their bishop.

4. There are bishops of ECUSA who are fearful of the immanent "consecration" of a woman bishop and who express concern for such issues as a Prayer Book which is accepted as expressive of the Faith, increasing departures from acceptance of the Articles of the Christian Faith, and challenges to Christian morality. They made overtures (now rebuffed) to ECUSA leadership for accommodation within its structure of their orthodoxy. These have suggested that they have no alternative other than to declare themselves out of communion with ECUSA, but fail to see at this time a viable structure for continuance of fidelity to the Faith.

The lack of visible expressed unity between the various jurisdictions as well as between the jurisdictions and the clergy and congregations dispossessed militates against an effective voice of The Church in expression of The Faith and in witness to Christ, thereby hindering evangelism and the mission "to seek for Christ's sheep that are dispersed abroad, and for his children who are in the midst of this naughty world, that they may be saved through Christ for ever."

Regarding the four "notes" of the Catholic Church: The present situation finds the groups mentioned above maintaining themselves as holy and apostolic, but deficient in that they are not one in the sense of united, or catholic in the sense of universal.

The situation demands immediate rectification for its very nature is breeding further decimation, consequent limited witness

and a dubious future. Although the various jurisdictions and the disposessed are faithful proponents of the Catholic and Apostolic Faith and Order of The Church, their lack of expressed fellowship with one another is a scandal to the community as well as to their own members. Individual members and clergy despair of this lack of unity and seek ways of concerted action with those of other jurisdictions, but fear being rebuffed in these attempts by their leadership. They seek, but cannot find, some unity with The Church outside their own jurisdictions.

Unless there is a proposal from some mutually acceptable world Church leader for a unity which transcends jurisdictional concerns, it can be forseen by a study of history that the present jurisdictions will fragment and splinter away until there is no effective Catholic and Apostolic witness with the capability of serving The Faith and its expression. Future generations would require the foundation of a missionary enterprise in order to begin again the work once evident in North America.

TASK:

1. To facilitate the expression of the One, Holy Catholic and Apostolic Faith with unity and clarity as Christ's, and to facilitate its effective witness.

2. To provide the best means for a continuance of The Anglican expression of The Catholic Faith in North America in unity and harmony with faithful Anglicans world-wide.

3. To share through mission and a united voice the proclamation of The Faith in its Anglican expression throughout the world.

PROPOSAL #1

To take no definitive action other than to foster by communication, meetings and prayer, a future unity of traditionalists.

PRO; This course of action would not threaten either the leadership of the apostate remnant of the Anglican Communion or the insular minded in the jurisdictions of traditionalists.

CON: The situation is so demanding of immediate improvement that this gradual approach would be insufficient to counter the present rapid and accelerating deterioration.

PROPOSAL #2

Proclaim publically a reconstituted Anglican Communion, complete with leadership (bishop or archbishop) in England and full organization of national and provincial churches. The best choice for leader of this Reconstituted Anglican Communion would be the present Bishop of London, due to the acknowledged historic importance of his see, and the global recognition of the incumbent as the primary leader of traditionalists. In Canada and elsewhere where traditionalists are presently united, they would be publically proclaimed the national member church of the RAC. In the USA and elsewhere where traditionalists are divided, the Bishop of London would call upon them to resolve their differences and, having this accomplished, to notify him of their establishment of a national church of the RAC.

PRO: This would attempt to accomplish the longer range goal with the desired immediacy.

CON: There is not presently sufficient unity and trust among traditionalists to enable this plan. The ecclesiastical

and secular spheres in England are not prepared for the Bishop of London to assume this international role. At the present time the leadership of the various jurisdictions is unprepared to relinquish many of their assumed prerogatives even in the cause of traditionalism.

This grand scheme is too premature to have any degree of immediate success; lack of success would doom it to lack of any credibility to proclaim The Faith clearly. The result would be even greater decimating divisions among traditionalists, and a situation even more disasterous than that presently prevailing.

PROPOSAL #3

Provide for a declared and visible expression of unity among Anglican traditionalists world-wide, without the immediate construction of an organizational structure. This Anglican Communion of The Faith would not be unlike the present relationship of the Bishop of London with disposessed clergy and congregations.

The Bishop of London, having declared he would not seek but would lead traditionalism should it come to him, now as a Bishop of The Church of God, not as a bishop of any particular see, would ask for a registry of those bishops, clergy and laity who subscribe to a statement of orthodox Faith and Order. Those so subscribing would declare their communion in The Faith with the present Bishop of London, and he, in turn, would declare his communion with them. Communion with one another would be presupposed by communion with London.

In this proposal, the unity would be in The Faith rather than, at least at first, within a structure. There would be no immediate call for a union of jurisdictions, although the unity in The Faith would have to be understood to preclude antagonistic actions where jurisdictions coincide. At the outset it would be made clear that this Communion in The Faith, while open to discussion with all, would begin in the USA (and elsewhere where a similar situation might prevail) only with those whose orders are derived from episcopal orders presently acceptable in the Anglican Communion. For example: in the USA, ECUSA and Philippine successions.

PRO: This plan would achieve unity, if not immediate union, without threatening those who now cherish their jurisdictional independence.

Since it does not create a new structure, it poses no threat (real or imagined) to the existing remnants of The Anglican Communion.

The active participation and leadership of the present Bishop of London provides for the link which all now deem necessary to the Anglican Communion, yet does not call upon him to violate any restrictions of his land or church since territorial jurisdiction is not involved. He would not declare communion with any overseas as the Bishop of London, but as a Bishop in The Church of God.

This plan provides for a unity which can be achieved now, and with a promise of union at such time as it might become possible.

This plan provides for individuals presently without clerical leadership to participate in the wider unity in The Faith.

In the USA, the various jurisdictions, being in communion with the Bishop of London, would be called upon to work together in harmony and to give common witness to The Faith. The direct influence of the Bishop of London which even now is desired by jurisdictions seeking unity, would be beneficial in promotion of discussion with the avowed purpose of uniting the jurisdictions. His influence would be even more welcome under this plan than presently, for he would have taken the initiative in this communion in The Faith.

CON: This would be only a temporary solution to an immediate yet continuing situation.

RECOMMENDATION FOR IMPLEMENTATION

It is recommended that Proposal #3 be implemented as expeditiously as possible, no later than Advent 1987. The early implementation is not only demanded by the currently deteriorating condition in the United States, but with a view to the coming Lambeth Conference as well as the anticipated election of a woman as bishop and the anticipated General Convention 1988 approval of the covenanting process of COCU.

It is recommended that, with the acceptance by the Bishop of London of Proposal #3, amended as he deems advisable, the Bishop of London by direct communication and/or conferences with the bishops or archbishops leading the present jurisdictions, as well as with remaining orthodox Bishops of ECUSA, seek their approval of the Proposal together with any suggested modifications.

It is recommended that, when the Bishop of London deems he has received sufficient indication of support for this Proposal, its announcement be made by him publically with as wide a dissemination as possible. Such announcement would be made in the public media as well as in the newspapers and journals of the various jurisdictions.

It is recommended that, when response to the announcement is deemed sufficient by the Bishop of London, he take the initiative in calling for a Conference of those who have signed the declaration proposed, declared their communion with the Bishop of London, and with whom he has declared his communion. The purpose of this Conference would be to facilitate the three goals listed as "TASK" in this study.

NOTE:

This study does not adequately deal with the Anglican Communion situation apart from North America. Its author lacks adequate knowledge of the other provinces. However, it is felt that the recommended non-structural communion in The Faith could be adapted according to local conditions. Surely, for example, there would be a communion in The Faith between Australia and those in the USA if each was in communion with London.